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News Release

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20-year prison sentence for Evan Craft in 2015 vehicular manslaughter case

LIHU'E – Prosecuting Attorney Justin F. Kollar announced that Evan Randal Craft, 36, originally of Westlake Village, California, was today sentenced to serve an open 20-year term of imprisonment for running over and killing Michael Helppie, Jr., in the early morning hours of June 1, 2015, outside the Nāwiliwili Tavern in Līhu'e.

The Honorable Kathleen N.A. Watanabe handed down the sentence following an emotional hearing where several members of Helppie's 'ohana addressed the Court. Craft also made a statement and was represented by court-appointed counsel Shauna Lee Cahill, Esq.

The case was prosecuted for the State of Hawai'i by Kollar, who made the State's sentencing arguments. Craft was sentenced on a single charge of Manslaughter, a class A felony, to which he pled No Contest and was found guilty on June 21 of this year.

Police investigation revealed that Craft and Helppie had entered into a disagreement outside the Tavern outside closing time, which moved over to the jetty area, where Craft was living out of his car at the time. The disagreement grew physical. Craft then got into his car, backed it up, and accelerated forward, crushing Helppie to death against a concrete parking lot divider.

Kauai Police Chief Darryl D. Perry thanked Prosecutor Kollar, Lt. Jenkins, and Officer Hanna for their hard work which resulted in a successful conviction and the subsequent prison

sentence. "While we cannot bring Michael back, we can bring justice and a sense of closure to his family and friends," stated Chief Perry.

Kollar credited the Kaua'i Police Department for a thorough investigation leading to a successful prosecution.

Kollar state: "Detective Christian Jenkins and Officer Shawn Hanna were able to determine through the use of advanced scientific techniques that Craft actually accelerated forward and steered towards Helppie, who was walking across the parking area in front of Craft's car. That's what convinced us this was an intentional act and not an accident. Rather than simply drive away, Craft made the choice to run down and kill Michael Helppie in a senseless act of violence that he can never take away or undo.

"Our thoughts and prayers remain, as always, with Michael Helppie, Jr., his family and his 'ohana."



EVAN CRAFT
6/1/2015
KPD CELLBLOCK

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